



SPRING 2011

Green Words

THE NEWSLETTER OF TREE • TURF • GARDEN • LAND • FOREST



From where I write this on March 3, I am looking at bright white snow banks half way up my windows set against a brilliant blue sky, but I am seeing, hearing, feeling and believing in green:

- The song of the chick-a-dee I heard this morning heralds the upcoming green season;
- The green of Chippers (*Benjamin Moore Aura Tarrytown, by the way*) and the passion for green and growing things that pervades everything we do in our company;
- The green of income for our employees who are back to full-time work to support their families, and for the new green hires we are beginning to recruit for the upcoming season;
- The plans we are making for our new production organic greenhouse next to our large tree nursery at our headquarters, and for becoming dealers/installers for a line of very green personal greenhouses;
- The green of the seed catalogs and garden design magazines that has gardeners everywhere almost drooling with anticipation;
- And lastly, the green of renewal of the spirit that coincides with the lengthening days.

May your spring and summer be filled with the many shades of green.

—Mundy Wilson

GOING TO POTAGER:

Enjoy Beauty AND Good Eating

by Liz Krieg *Garden Designer & Greenhouse Manager*

[POTAGER (*pronounced poe-ta-zhay*), AKA: the kitchen garden]

POTAGERS ARE BOTH UTILITARIAN (English kitchen garden), and discernibly pleasing (French style). In the days of yore, in old England, most of the commoners had tiny little homes. They grew small gardens that were largely serviceable and fulfilled the family needs for herbs, vegetables, small fruits and flowers. Space in these gardens was spare at best, and plants were crammed in—the type of garden that Lady Catherine de Bourg would have admonished Lizzy Bennet’s mother for: “Madam you have a very small garden!”

The English gentry had much larger, more formal gardens, with hedges, stone paths, fountains, and of course, an abundance of vegetables and flowers. The resultant end, whether a peasant or gentry garden, was bodacious and obviously romantic in appeal. Historically, English garden style is what spawned American garden interest, even though it is largely an adaptation of other cultural styles.

“You can bury a lot of troubles digging in the dirt.”

—UNKNOWN

Italian gardeners were the first true aesthetes in formal garden design. The French formal style was born out of Italian influence around the end of the 15th century at King Charles VIII’s *Chateau d’Amboise*, built by the in-house Italian priest. The French aesthetic was based upon symmetry and the principle of ‘imposing order over nature.’ However, it is the 16th century French monks who are to be thanked for the inception of the potager kitchen garden, which was utilized extensively at monasteries, and spread from those numerous locations.

A potager is an ornamental vegetable garden based upon the formality of symmetry (or geometry in bed and path layout) and yet is somewhat loose in the use of materials. One might choose to use vegetables that are visually appealing in the potager. As examples, purple frilly cabbage instead of standard green, handsome eggplant with its gorgeous leaves, red-stemmed chard grouped en masse, and curly parsley makes a fabulous edible hedging material. Planting in blocks or making parterres (hedged planting blocks) within the potager garden gives a sense of order and designated spaces of function.

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Going Greenhouse!

Chippers is a proud sponsor of the Northern Stage spring production:

EVITA

April 13 – May 1, 2011

Rejoice in this acclaimed musical that ran for over 1,500 performances on Broadway.

The rise to power of the larger-than-life Eva Peron has thrilled audiences around the world for 30 years, and the passion now comes to the Upper Valley!

northernstage.org



FEATURED POET:

Ruth Pitter

(1897-1992)

What do we look for as reward?

Some little sounds, and scents,
and scenes.

A small hand darting
strawberry-ward.

A woman's aprons full of greens.

The sense that we have
brought to birth.

Out of the cold and heavy soil,

The blessed fruits
and flowers of earth

Is large reward for our toil.

— from *The Diehards*, 1941

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Other than the afore-mentioned parsley as a hedging material, germander works well, as does the smaller boxwood cultivars (although box requires shearing maintenance). Short annual flowers can be used for hedging as well.

Annual flowers are actually best suited for use in the potager, as this will not limit year to year changes in layout and plant materials. Ornamental herbs can be tucked in everywhere. Short edger types of thyme, in various scents and leaf varieties, and Greek oregano with extended flowering periods, are easy growers. Mid-height herbs can deliver a double punch, like colorful multi-use calendula, and borage with its gorgeous blue flowers that are stellar when candied, or frozen beautifully in an ice cube. Lemon balm is an aromatic, highly-textured plant with more uses than one can count, and is a favorite of honey bees. Bronze fennel can be tucked into tight places and will offer an elegant wisp of fine texture and licorice flavor when you need it. Tall architectural cardoon is not only edible, but gives a garden presence like no other plant.

Large or small, most potagers have a charm not found elsewhere on a property. Potagers are best fenced in, providing a backdrop as well as form within in which to mark out symmetrical paths. Needless to say, simplicity should reign in the potager. Keep the plant list spare, but numerous in quantities to retain the formality. Sometimes a decorative element such as a large urn, compass dial, or fountain is placed in a central intersection as a focal point. Potagers are peaceful, naturally busy and beautiful places. It is lovely to have a cozy seating area for contemplating recipes and butterflies, a wonderful place to take sanctuary from the hustle and bustle of daily life.

If you have potager questions, or would like assistance with planning or planting one, please contact Liz via email: gardens@chippersinc.com.



SPRING & SUMMER
Dates to Note in 2011

March 21 *Spring Equinox*

March 25-27 *HomeLife Show, Hanover, NH*

April 1 *Don't Be Fooled! Deadline to prepay and return signed Chippers Turf/PHC contracts for discounts*

April 15 *Deadline for Isosculpt entry—go to Chippers Inc on Facebook*

May 20 *Chippers' Pomfret Open House & Dedication to WAR, 5-7pm*

June 21 *Summer Solstice*

June 24-26 *Lakeside Living Expo, Gunstock, NH*

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New London 603.526.4500
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GREENWORDS

is provided free of charge to anyone who loves plants. If you know someone who might enjoy this publication, have them call us at 866.683.6222. Current and past issues are available at our website.

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ASK MR. GRASS: *Customer Forum*

Q: How often should I aerate my lawn, and why?

Lawn aeration is a mechanical process whereby a heavy machine pulls cylindrical plugs from your lawn and deposits the cores of thatch/grass on the surface. Ideally this process is done annually in the spring or fall for maximum benefit as it relates to thatch maintenance, reducing compaction, and increasing air, light, and nutrient availability. Often your lawn can be over seeded with a superior blend of grass better suited to the site after aeration is completed. The heavy weight of the aerator combined with long tines to insure good plugs are critical factors in completing a successful core aeration job.

Q: How can I put my turf on a healthier, more natural path?

There is no single easy answer to this question other than to say it is a process and way of caring for your lawn as much as what is applied to it. Proper mowing height and technique can play a huge roll in placing tremendous stress on your lawn or reducing it. One bad cut can spread disease, begin a crabgrass infestation, or predispose your lawn to insect damage. Choosing mechanical and non-chemical treatments can further assist your quest toward reduced fertilizer dependence and the need for more “comprehensive” counter measures. Aeration, over seeding, sea kelp, compost tea, coating grass seed with beneficial fungi all promote the lawn’s internal defenses against insects, disease, and environmental stress. Improving the soil itself—by nourishing the micro-organisms below the surface—is often of greater importance than a quick shot of fertilizer. A true balance with your lawn can only be achieved with sincere cultural practices when combined with properly timed lawn treatments utilizing only the best products.

Q: My grass is a disaster, where do I begin?

A weak, thin lawn labeled as a disaster, is a bio-system out of balance in multiple ways. The lawn should be checked by a professional to determine soil inadequacies, micro-climate, turf types, and weed and insect pressures. Only when all of these pieces are looked at with a measurable game plan for improvement can your lawn be brought into a long term balance yielding tangible, visible results. Take solace: most lawns can be improved without costly renovations!

[Please email your turf related questions to: mrgrass@chippersinc.com]

*We cordially invite you to attend our
25-Year Anniversary Spring Open House*

at our Woodstock headquarters

Friday, May 20 from 5-7pm

Refreshments will be served

**We will honor our late Founder & President,
Will Russell, with a dedication ceremony at 6pm**

*Come see our new wholesale production greenhouse,
where we plan to grow natives, edibles and ornamentals
for our clients and educational purposes.*

Please RSVP by May 1 to Danielle at 802.457.5100 x 1101

MEET A CHIPPER



Liz Krieg is our in-house garden designer and greenhouse manager. She was born in Arizona and traveled all over the globe before landing in Vermont, in 1979. A graduate of Johnson State College, Liz honed her love of plants into an occupation as a certified organic grower of produce, hot house tomatoes, and small fruit, but flowers eventually won out. She was the founding president of the Vermont Cut Flower Council, and this aspect of her expertise eventually morphed into growing landscape plants and delivering landscape design and installation through her successful business, Rising Sun Landscape Company. Liz is a Vermont Certified Horticulturist, a NOFA accredited Organic Land Care Professional, and an adjunct educational instructor for New England Wildflower Society.

Liz is an ardent plantswoman, always keenly curious about plants, and is constantly adding new and improved varieties to her repertoire. She loves to disseminate her horticulture knowledge and is a well-known garden lecturer, traveling around New England giving fabulous presentations for garden clubs, flower shows and other various horticulture educational concerns.

When Liz is not working with plants, or with people who love them, she has other varied hobbies. She loves traveling, reading and the study of ancient civilizations. Being an outdoor enthusiast, Liz loves to hike and kayak, especially at Lake Willoughby where she and her husband, Cory, have a camp. She is an amateur photographer, and current favorite subjects include Bella and Bradley, their grandchildren.



GOING GREENHOUSE!

We are now dealers/installers for the **Freedom Greenhouse**, a high quality cedar, solar-powered (for both ventilation and watering), made-in-Maine growing environment for the backyard enthusiast.

The Greenhouse is available in the following sizes:
8 x 8, 8 x 12, 12 x 12, 12 x 18, 12 x 24

Our professional staff can provide expert site evaluation and preparation. You can have your greenhouse and vacation too!

Come see our display model at the Hanover HomeLife Show, March 25-27. Visit our website for additional information.

*“An addiction to gardening
is not all bad
when you consider
all the other
choices in life.”*

— CORA LEA BELL



Enhancing Your Outdoor Living Spaces

1241 Pomfret Road
Woodstock, VT 05091

